

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee

H.B. No. 5044

AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017.

February 18, 2016

Quyen Truong, West Hartford CT

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Quyen Truong and I am a registered voter in the town of West Hartford. I am here to testify on H.B. No. 5044 An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017. I am opposed to the proposed cut to the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (APAAC), which would effectively eliminate this core service.

As an Asian American in CT, I value the work of APAAC because they represent the voice of my community. If the budget cuts the APAAC and the Commission are forced to merge, how do we prioritize different issues and needs among different minority communities? How do we determine whether Burmese refugee needs are more important than Latino services or African American issues? Who will advocate for Asians in the absence of APAAC?

APAAC works to connect different Asian communities to achieve common goals, and this is important because we are an educated, powerful voting constituency. Asian votes matter in this upcoming election. We are the fastest growing minority in CT and in the USA. According to Census Bureau data, from 2000-2013, the number of US native and foreign-born Asian residents rose 56%. Asia is now the largest source of legal immigrants to the United States, constituting 40% of new arrivals in 2013. Between 2000 and 2010, the Asian Pacific American population in CT increased by 65%. Asians represent the majority minority in 40% of Connecticut school districts. With surging numbers, many of our Asian ethnic group votes are all up for grabs. For towns where swing votes can decide an election, appealing to your Asian constituents will make a difference. Ignoring us is a disservice to our diversifying communities.

APAAC is the only statewide advocacy organization with the partnerships, community connections, and infrastructure to reach the Asian community across CT. APAAC helps you connect with your Asian constituents and allows your Asian constituents to share their concerns with you. If we lose APAAC, Asians will lose a crucial community coordinator and you will lose a connection with the Asian community. Your Asian constituents will not have a place to turn to for grievances, nor be able to offer critical feedback to inform decision makers. You will lose access to and connection with your Asian constituents, many of whom would not have the means to voice their concerns without the advocacy and coordination by APAAC.

Preserve the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission. Save this vital resource so we can continue to connect with and cultivate strong relationships among the Asian communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.